



Conversation

Tue 2 Dec 2014
7 p.m.

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,
Unter den Linden 6, Room 3059

Leila Dakhli
Maaïke Voorhoeve
Cilja Harders

Tunisia in Transition: In Search of a New Political Language

In January 2011, the “Arab spring” started in Tunisia when it ousted its authoritarian leader after 23 years of rule. Until this day, it is the only country in the region where the revolutionary process seems to have “succeeded”. Tunisia has passed a democratic constitution that relates universality to specificity. It embraces religious roots and identity but also enshrines civil, legal and rational politics, and guarantees equality between men and women at the workplace, and in all elected assemblies. On 26 October and 23 November 2014, the Tunisian people voted and will vote in free and equal elections. The political transition, however, is characterised not only by the will for compromise but also by a highly polarized and sometimes violent renegotiation of what the new Tunisia should look like. This process is taking place in a highly polarised context where groups accuse each other of being “anti-revolutionary”, “anti-democratic”, and “anti-modern”.

In the Conversation, Leila Dakhli (Centre Marc Bloch) and Maaïke Voorhoeve (EHESS, Paris/Rechtskulturen Fellow 2013/14), will discuss the political transition in Tunisia. They will address the ways in which authoritarian legacies, narratives concerning the country’s identity are renegotiated, and how certain concepts—such as the flag, the notion of patriotism, or women’s rights—that are closely intertwined with national identity have (or have not) transformed.

The Conversation will be moderated by Cilja Harders (Freie Universität Berlin/member of EUME), and marks the publication of the book *Gender and Divorce Law in North Africa: Sharia, Custom and the Personal Status Code in Tunisia* by Maaïke Voorhoeve (2014).

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